

Message Text

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PASS CEA FOR MALKIEL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, OECD
SUBJECT: INTERFUTURES STEERING COMMITTEE - NOV 29-30

REFS: A) FUT(76)2 B) FUT(76)3

1. SUMMARY: SECOND MEETING OF INTERFUTURES STEERING COMMITTEE WAS HELD NOV 29-30. DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANCE WAS BRIEF, CONSISTING PRIMARILY OF REVIEW BY SECRETARIAT OF OUTLINE OF WORK PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS CONTAINED IN REF A. MORE LIVELY DISCUSSION OF FORMS OF COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENTS REVEALED CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF CONSENSUS BEHIND SECRETARIAT'S PROPOSAL THAT EXERCISE CULMINATE IN TWO (CR AT LEAST CNEJ "MAJOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS" IN 1978. ALTHOUGH DECISION WAS PUT OFF UNTIL NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (TENTATIVELY SET FOR MAY 5-6), MAJORITY OF DELEGATIONS GAVE TENTATIVE SUPPORT TO CONCEPT THAT THIS MEETING (OR MEETINGS) SHOULD BE HELD AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. (SEE PARAS 10-12 FOR MISSION COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION ON THIS QUESTION.) 1977
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BUDGET WAS APPROVED AS PROPOSED. END SUMMARY

2. PROGRESS OF RESEARCH. RESEARCH TEAM DIRECTOR LESOURNE OPENED MEETING WITH EXPLANATION THAT, DUE TO UNEXPECTED DELAYS IN RECRUITMENT, PROGRESS IN INITIAL PHASES OF WORK HAD BEEN LESS RAPID THAN EXPECTED. TEAM

WAS NOW VIRTUALLY COMPLETE, HOWEVER, AND WORK WAS WELL UNDERWAY IN VIRTUALLY ALL AREAS OF PHASES A (CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERAL FRAMEWORK) AND B (CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC TOPICS) NOTED IN REF DOC. MAIN TECHNIQUE FOR DEALING WITH THESE TOPICS WAS FORMATION OF INTERNAL TASK FORCES TO PRODUCE PAPERS WHICH ARE THEN DISCUSSED IN SEMINARS BY MEMBERS OF RESEARCH TEAM. MAIN PRODUCT OF PHASE A WOULD BE AN ANALYSIS OR "USERS GUIDE" OF WORLD MODELS WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY END OF THE YEAR. TEAM HAD ALSO MOVED FORWARD ON PHASE B AND EXPECTED TO BE IN A POSITION BY EARLY NEXT YEAR TO BEGIN PHASE C (ELABORATION OF SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE) IN SEVERAL CROSS-CUTTING CLUSTERS OF SPECIFIC TOPICS. PHASE C WOULD IMPLY NOT ONLY MORE IN DEPTH STUDY BUT ALSO A REDEFINITION AND NARROWING OF SCOPE OF ISSUES UNDER CONSIDERATION.

3. LAUNCHING GENERAL DISCUSSION, U.S. REP (CEA MEMBER MALKIEL) RECOGNIZED DIFFICULTIES TEAM HAD FACED IN GETTING STARTED BUT INDICATED THAT HE HAD EXPECTED FROM PHASE B AT THIS STAGE MORE CONCRETE PLAN FOR WORK ON SPECIFIC TOPICS OF MAJOR POLICY CONCERN TO GOVERNMENTS. HE NOTED THAT ONLY AREA IN REF DOC FOR WHICH PRECISE PLAN HAD BEEN LAID DOWN WAS PARA 9 (C)(VII) ON COMMODITY MARKETS AND THE STRUCTURE OF WORLD TRADE, AND URGED TEAM TO GET QUICKLY DOWN TO SPECIFICS IN OTHER PHASE B AREAS. IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERVENTION, MALKIEL POINTED TO IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH HE VIEWED PROBLEM OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND CONTRIBUTION WHICH INTERFUTURES

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COULD MAKE TO GOVERNMENTAL UNDERSTANDING IN THIS AREA. FINALLY, HE URGED TEAM TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH GOVERNMENTS WHEN SELECTING AREAS FOR MORE IN DEPTH STUDY IN PHASE C.

4. ALL OF THESE POINTS WERE TAKEN BY RESEARCH TEAM AND RECEIVED GENERAL SUPPORT OF OTHER DELS, MANY OF WHOM ALSO EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF WORK ON CAPITAL SUPPLY PROBLEM. TEAM INDICATED THAT IN DEPTH WORK HAD ALREADY BEGUN ON CROSS-CUTTING AREAS SUCH AS RAW MATERIALS SUPPLY AND MARKETS, LOCATION OF INDUSTRY AND WORLD FINANCIAL AND MONETARY PROBLEMS WHICH, IN ADDITION TO WORK ON INVESTMENT, APPEARED LIKELY TO FORM A MAJOR PART OF PHASE C. IT WAS AGREED THAT ONE OF MAJOR ROLES OF NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD BE TO AGREE ON THE FOCUS AND NARROWING OF TOPICS NECESSARY FOR PHASE C.

5. FORMS OF COMMUNICATION. LESOURNE INDICATED THAT IN ADDITION TO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND REGULAR INFORMAL CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENTS, HE SAW AS MAIN MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING PROJECT'S GOAL OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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WITH GOVERNMENTS A SERIES OF MEETINGS OF SENIOR POLICY EXPERTS CULMINATING IN TWO MAJOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS IN 1978, ONE STRUCTURED AROUND ISSUES AMONG OECD GOVERNMENTS AND THE OTHER FOCUSING ON NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS. TEAM STRESSED THAT EXPERT MEETINGS WERE INTENDED FOR POLICY RATHER THAN TECHNICAL EXPERTS. PRELIMINARY VIEW WAS THAT MAJOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS SHOULD BE AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

6. THERE WAS GENERAL BUT HIGHLY TENTATIVE SUPPORT FOR CONCEPT THAT MINISTERIAL MEETING (OR MEETINGS) SHOULD BE WORKING HYPOTHESIS. HOWEVER, MOST DELS EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A BASIC DECISION IN THIS REGARD. SWEDISH AND SEVERAL OTHER DELS QUESTIONED THE CONCEPT OF HAVING TWO SEPARATE MEETINGS, VOICING VIEW THAT SEPARATION OF INTRA-OECD FROM NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES

WOULD DEFEAT INTEGRATING PURPOSE OF PROJECT. SEVERAL DELS STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL PREPARATIONS IF MINISTERIAL MEETING WERE DECIDED UPON, NOTING THAT RESEARCH TEAM'S WORK AND EXPERT MEETINGS WOULD NEED TO BE STRUCTURED SO AS TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS. GERMAN DEL WAS ONLY ONE EXPLICITLY TO OPPOSE CONCEPT OF MINISTERIAL MEETING, ARGUING THAT PREPARATIONS WOULD ULTIMATELY ABSORB ALL RESOURCES OF THE PROJECT. IT WAS AGREED THAT NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WOULD BE DEADLINE FOR TAKING DECISION ON THIS QUESTION. IN THE MEANTIME, LESOURNE ASKED STEERING COMMITTEE REPS TO EXPLORE THIS TOPIC INFORMALLY WITHIN THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND TO RESPOND BY LETTER AS TO WHETHER GOVERNMENTS LEANED TOWARD ONE OR TWO MINISTERIAL MEETINGS OR WHETHER THEY WOULD PREFER TO LIMIT MEETINGS TO HIGH LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS. IN CASE OF MINISTERIAL PREFERENCE, DELS WERE ASKED TO EXPLORE WHO LIKELY ATTENDEES MIGHT BE. LESOURNE AGREED TO SPECIFY THOSE QUESTIONS IN A LETTER TO EACH DEL.

7. ON QUESTION OF REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERN-
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MENTS, MALKIEL AND SEVERAL OTHER DELS STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF TWO WAY COMMUNICATION, I.E., TEAM SHOULD BE PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT GOVERNMENTS CONSIDER TO BE RELEVANT, POLICY RELATED ISSUES FOR RESEARCH. MOST DELS WELCOMED ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERFUTURES NEWSLETTER BUT URGED TEAM TO USE IT AS A VEHICLE FOR CONVEYING GIST AND FLAVOR OF ITS OWN WORK MORE THAN FOR ANALYSIS OF WORK CONDUCTED ELSEWHERE, AS WAS CASE FOR FIRST ISSUE.

8. PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET. ALL DELS AGREED TO 1977 BUDGET AS PROPOSED, MALKIEL AND SEVERAL OTHERS INDICATING THAT NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OVER THREE YEAR PERIOD WOULD NOT BE EXPANDED BEYOND INITIAL COMMITMENT. TEAM REPORTED ON DISCUSSIONS TO DATE WITH FOUNDATIONS (PRINCIPALLY FORD, ROCKEFELLER AND SEVERAL JAPANESE FOUNDATIONS) INDICATING THAT IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT PROJECT COULD OBTAIN AN ADDITIONAL 3 MILLION FRANCS FROM THESE INSTITUTIONS. EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAD ALSO AGREED TO CONTRIBUTE 500,000 FRANCS. FOUNDATION FUNDS WOULD A) ALLOW PROJECT TO TAKE ON CONSULTANTS (SOME OF THEM NOTED EXPERTS FROM LDCS) TO MAKE MORE IN DEPTH STUDY OF LDC PROBLEMS AND B) FREE SUFFICIENT GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO ALLOW BULK OF REGULAR RESEARCH TEAM TO BE MAINTAINED THROUGH 1978. LESOURNE NOTED THAT ACTUAL CONTRACTS TO ACCEPT FOUNDATION FUNDS WOULD REQUIRE COUNCIL APPROVAL BUT ASKED STEERING COMMITTEE AUTHORIZATION TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH HE EXPECTED TO

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CONCLUDE SUCCESSFULLY EARLY NEXT YEAR. THIS AUTHORIZATION WAS GRANTED, FOLLOWING TEAM'S ASSURANCE THAT FOUNDATION PARTICIPATION WOULD BE LIMITED TO SPECIFIC AREAS AND WOULD NOT ENTAIL COMPROMISE OF PROJECT'S BASIC, CONFIDENTIAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORIENTATION.

9. NEXT MEETING. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WAS SET FOR MAY 5-6. LESOURNE INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE FOCUSED MORE ON SUBSTANCE AND THAT TEAM WOULD PRESENT SUBSTANTIVE DOCUMENTS AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE WORK. MAIN PURPOSES WILL BE TO DECIDE A) AREAS TO BE COVERED UNDER PHASE C OF PROJECT AND B) WHETHER OR NOT PROJECT SHOULD AIM AT MINISTERIAL MEETING (OR MEETINGS) IN 1978.

10. MISSION COMMENT: WE ARE CONCERNED OVER THE DEVELOPING IDEA THAT THE INTERFUTURES EXERCISE SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD "MAJOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS" PARTICULARLY IF THESE ARE TAKEN TO MEAN FULL-BLOWN MINISTERIAL GATHERINGS. THE CONCEPT OF AD HOC MEETINGS OF POLICY MAKERS WAS BUILT INTO THE PROJECT AS A MEANS OF ENGAGING SENIOR POLICY OFFICIALS IN TWO-WAY

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COMMUNICATION WITH THE RESEARCH TEAM AIMED AT ENSURING THAT ITS WORK REMAINED POLICY RELEVANT AND THAT IT RECEIVED APPROPRIATE ATTENTION AT HIGH LEVELS. OUR VIEW WAS THAT SUCH MEETINGS WOULD BE MORE WIDELY SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THEY WOULD BE MORE LIMITED, RATHER INFORMAL MEETINGS WITH MIXED--PERHAPS INCLUDING MINISTERIAL--ATTENDANCE. THE THOUGHT WAS THAT THESE MEETINGS WOULD FOCUS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES OR INTERRELATED SETS OF ISSUES RATHER THAN COVERING THE WHOLE GAMUT OF NORTH/SOUTH OR INTRA-OECD RELATIONSHIPS.

11. OUR CONCERN IS THAT IF PLENARY MINISTERIAL MEETINGS ARE ESTABLISHED AS THE GOAL OF THIS EXERCISE MOST OF THE SMALL PROJECT TAMS' ENERGIES WILL HAVE TO BE CHanneLED TO THAT END, THAT LOGISTICAL PREPARATIONS WILL EVENTUALLY ABSORB A MAJOR PORTION OF THEIR TIME, AND THAT THE TEAM'S ANALYSIS MAY QUICKLY BEGIN TO CONCENTRATE ON PRODUCING CONCLUSIONS WHICH WILL BE WIDELY ACCEPTABLE TO MINISTERS. THE MEETINGS THEMSELVES COULD CONSIST ESSENTIALLY OF EXCHANGES OF PREPARED STATEMENTS RATHER THAN FREE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE ANALYSIS PRODUCED BY THE RESEARCH TEAM.

12. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THIS ANALYSIS, MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT WE BEGIN URGING RESEARCH TEAM TO RETHINK COMMUNICATIONS ASPECT OF WORK PROGRAM AND RETURN TO LESS CUMBERSOME IDEA OF AD HOC MEETINGS DISCUSSED IN PREPARATORY MEETINGS. RESPONSE TO LETTER PROMISED BY LESOURNE (PARA 6) WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US CLEARLY TO SET FORTH OUR VIEWS BUT WE SHOULD BEGIN TO MAKE THESE POINTS IN ALL DISCUSSIONS WITH RESEARCH TEAM.
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